



# HENRY HUGH SHELTON

1 October 1997 —

**H**ugh Shelton was born 2 January 1942 in Tarboro, North Carolina, and grew up on a farm near the small town of Speed. After graduating from North Edgecombe High School, he entered North Carolina State University. He enjoyed the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and enrolled for an additional two years beyond the two then mandatory for men attending land-grant colleges. When he received his bachelor of science in textile technology in June 1963, he was commissioned a second lieutenant of infantry in the Army Reserve.

Lieutenant Shelton spent two years on active duty at Fort Benning, Georgia, where he was a platoon leader first with the 2d Infantry Division and then with the 1st Cavalry Division. While at Fort Benning, he completed the Ranger course at the Army Infantry School, qualified as a parachutist, and was promoted to first lieutenant. Shelton remained in the Army Reserve when he returned to civilian life in July 1965 to work for Regal Textile Corporation in Ware Shoals, South Carolina, a job he had accepted before entering military service. Although promoted before completing the company's training program, he decided that he preferred Army life and in 1966 applied to return to active duty as an officer in the Regular Army.

Several months later, he received orders to report to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, for training in preparation for assignment to the Special Forces in Vietnam. Shelton served from September 1966 until July 1967 with the 5th Special Forces Group along the Ho Chi Minh Trail, engaged in cross-border operations to impede the flow of men and supplies from North Vietnam

**General Henry H. Shelton**  
United States Army





Lieutenant Shelton on patrol along the Vietnamese border, 1967.

through Laos into South Vietnam. Promoted in March 1967, Captain Shelton received command of Detachment A-104 at Ha Thanh in the mountains of Quang Ngai province in South Vietnam in July. Through December 1967 he worked with the South Vietnamese Special Forces and local Montagnard tribesmen to disrupt Viet Cong infiltration across

the Laotian border. He received a Purple Heart after a poisoned punji stake drove through his leg and was awarded the Bronze Star with "V" Device for valor for leading the repulse of Viet Cong that had attacked one of his South Vietnamese patrols.

Following his tour with the Special Forces, Captain Shelton was assigned to the





Lieutenant General Shelton prepares to jump with his troops in France to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the D-Day landings, June 1994.

Army Training Center at Fort Jackson, South Carolina. He would spend most of the rest of his career in airborne and light infantry units. In January 1969 he returned to Vietnam as an intelligence officer with the 173d Airborne Brigade, subsequently becoming a company commander and later acting battalion operations officer. From March 1970 through July 1972 he was back at Fort Benning at the Army Infantry School, initially as a student in the Infantry Officer Advanced Course and then as an instructor and later an operations officer in the Florida Phase, Ranger Department. In June 1973 Shelton graduated from the Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, and received a master's

degree in political science from Auburn University. From Alabama, he went to the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, where he held several staff positions, including executive officer of the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2d Brigade, and was promoted to major in February 1974. Major Shelton's next assignment was with the Army Military Personnel Center, Alexandria, Virginia, where he served from June 1977 until April 1979, handling the career management and assignments of other majors.

Promoted to lieutenant colonel in November 1978, Shelton assumed command of the 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry, 2d Brigade, 9th Infantry Division at Fort Lewis, Washington,





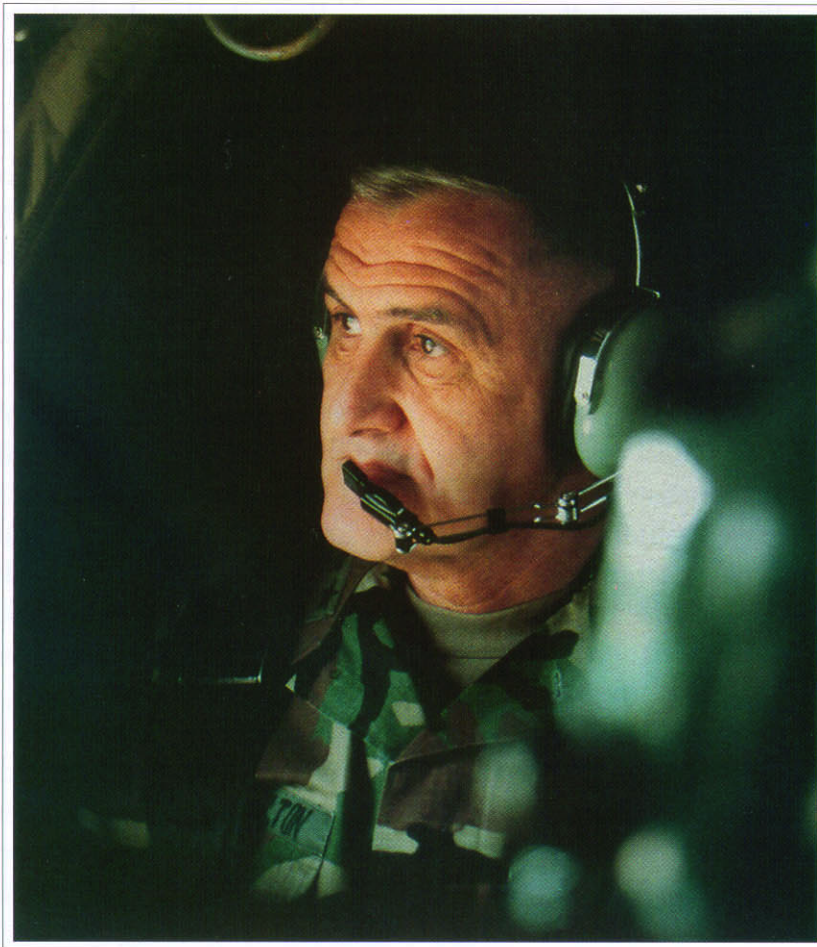
Lieutenant General Shelton (*right*), as Commander of Joint Task Force, Haiti, accompanies (*left to right*) Lieutenant Colonel Linton Graham, Commander, Caribbean Command Battalion; Ambassador William Swing, US Ambassador to Haiti; and Admiral Paul David Miller, Commander in Chief, US Atlantic Command, October 1994.

in April 1979. In June 1981 he became the division's Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations. Selected to attend the National War College, Fort McNair, Washington, DC, in 1982 and 1983, Lieutenant Colonel Shelton then served a brief tour at the Pentagon. Assigned to the Army Staff in June 1983, he chaired the Reserve Components Study Group in the Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel until his promotion to colonel in October, when he received command of the 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division at Fort Bragg. While brigade commander, Colonel Shelton

directed a combined arms task force during several overseas deployments. In November 1985 he became Chief of Staff of the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, New York.

After his selection for brigadier general, Shelton served in the Operations Directorate on the Joint Staff from July 1987 until July 1989 as a deputy director of the National Military Command Center and then as Deputy Director for Current Operations. He received his first star in August 1988. From the Joint Staff, Shelton went to Fort Campbell, Kentucky, as an assistant division commander





General Shelton during a visit to US soldiers deployed to Macedonia in support of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force, April 1998.

with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, Brigadier General Shelton led the division's forces in a deep helicopter assault into Iraq. The division was poised to block Iraqi units fleeing to Baghdad when the war ended.

Over the next five years, Shelton held two of the Army's most prestigious commands. In May 1991 he returned to Fort Bragg as Commanding General of the 82d Airborne Division; he was promoted to major general that October. He assumed command of XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg upon promotion to lieutenant general in June 1993. As

corps commander, Lieutenant General Shelton gained national prominence leading the multinational operation which in 1994 restored an environment safe for the return of Haiti's democratically elected government. Shelton received his fourth star on 1 March 1996 after becoming Commander in Chief of the US Special Operations Command (USCINCSOC) at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida, on 29 February. Leading the command during a period of greatly increased demand for special operations forces worldwide, General Shelton defined the characteristics necessary for these forces to function



effectively well into the twenty-first century. During his tenure the largest operational commitment of special operations forces was to the peacekeeping mission in the Balkans.

General Shelton became the fourteenth Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on 1 October 1997. He was the first Chairman with a special operations background. This experience, together with his long career in airborne and light infantry units, gave him extensive knowledge of the type of military operations that predominated in the post-Cold War world and expertise that meshed with Secretary of Defense William S. Cohen's interest in unconventional warfare.

The end of the Cold War had brought major reductions in the size of the US military and in the number of forces permanently stationed overseas. Increasingly, US forces were deployed in peacekeeping and humanitarian operations as well as in more traditional deterrent missions. When General Shelton became Chairman, the major overseas involvement of US forces was in Bosnia, where they had been employed in peace operations since 1993. His tenure saw an unprecedented pace of military operations, with additional US forces engaged in Kosovo and in enforcing United Nations sanctions against Iraq as well as participating in counterdrug operations, hurricane relief in Latin America, and numerous other contingency deployments.

Repeatedly declaring that he did not believe in "fair fights," Shelton endorsed the use of overwhelming force once the decision was made to commit US forces to combat. But he thought that, in the uncertain strategic environment, the US military must also be prepared to undertake flexible missions with limited objectives. Force readiness, therefore, was a top priority. To address problems in recruitment and retention that adversely affected readiness, General Shelton led the Joint Chiefs of Staff in winning administration and congressional support for major reforms to improve military pay and retirement.

Shelton believed that key to implementing the administration's strategic vision for the twenty-first century was a robust joint experimentation program, while executing more frequent deployments with a reduced force structure necessitated greater attention to force integration and interoperability. When members of Congress proposed establishing a joint experimentation command, he recommended replacing the Atlantic Command with a new command focused on oversight of joint doctrine and experimentation and the preparation of US-based forces for deployment overseas. Under General Shelton's guidance, the Joint Forces Command came into existence on 1 October 1999, the same day that he began his second term as Chairman.



# Henry Hugh Shelton

## General, USA

### Promotions

### Dates

Temporary      Permanent

2LT . . . . .	19 Sep 64*
1LT . . . . .	07 Jan 65
CPT. . . . .	19 Mar 67
MAJ . . . . .	07 Feb 74
LTC. . . . .	06 Nov 78
COL . . . . .	01 Oct 83
BG . . . . .	01 Aug 88
MG . . . . .	01 Oct 91
LTG . . . . .	07 Jun 93
GEN . . . . .	01 Mar 96

\*Date of rank adjusted for time not spent on active duty.

### Assignments

### Dates

From      To

Platoon Leader, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry, 2d Infantry Division; Student, Ranger Course, US Army Infantry School; Platoon Leader, Company D, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Benning, GA. . . . .	1963 . . . . . 1965
US Army Reserve, not on active duty . . . . .	1965 . . . . . 1966
Platoon Leader, Detachment B-52, 5th Special Forces Group, 1st Special Forces, US Army, Vietnam . . .	1966 . . . . . 1967
Commander, Detachment A-104, Company C, 5th Special Forces Group, US Army, Pacific. . . .	1967 . . . . . 1967
Executive Officer, 11th Battalion, 3d Training Brigade, US Army Training Center; then S-4, 3d Advanced Individual Training Brigade, Fort Jackson, SC . . . . .	1968 . . . . . 1968
S-2; later Commander, Company C; later Acting S-3, 4th Battalion, 503d Infantry, 173d Airborne Brigade, US Army, Vietnam. . . . .	1969 . . . . . 1970
Student, Infantry Officer Advanced Course; later Instructor, then Operations Officer, Ranger Department, US Army Infantry School, Fort Benning, GA. . . . .	1970 . . . . . 1972

## Assignments

## Dates

	From	To
Student, Air Command and Staff College, Maxwell Air Force Base, AL. . . . .	1972 . . . . .	1973
S-1, then S-3, 2d Brigade; then Chief, Officer Management Branch, then Deputy G-1, then Executive Officer, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2d Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, HI. . . . .	1973 . . . . .	1977
Professional Development Officer, Combat Arms Branch, later, Chief, Assignments Branch, Majors Division, Officer Personnel Management Directorate, US Army Military Personnel Center, Alexandria, VA . . . . .	1977 . . . . .	1979
Commander, 3d Battalion, 60th Infantry, 2d Brigade; then Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, 9th Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, WA . . . . .	1979 . . . . .	1982
Student, National War College, Fort McNair, Washington, DC . . . . .	1982 . . . . .	1983
Chairman, Reserve Components Study Group, Office, Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel, US Army, Washington, DC . . . . .	1983 . . . . .	1983
Commander, 1st Brigade, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC . . . . .	1983 . . . . .	1985
Chief of Staff, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, NY . . . . .	1985 . . . . .	1987
Deputy Director for Operations, National Military Command Center, J-3; then Deputy Director for Operations (Current Operations), J-3, Joint Staff, Washington, DC. . . . .	1987 . . . . .	1989
Assistant Division Commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, KY, also Assistant Division Commander, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), OPERATION DESERT STORM, Saudi Arabia, Aug 90-Mar 91 . . . . .	1989 . . . . .	1991
Commanding General, 82d Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, NC . . . . .	1991 . . . . .	1993



## Assignments

	Dates	
	From	To
Commanding General, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, Fort Bragg, NC, also Commander, Joint Task Force, Haiti, Sep-Oct 1994 . . . . .	1993 . . . . .	1996
Commander in Chief, US Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, FL . . . . .	1996 . . . . .	1997
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington, DC. . .	1997	

## Principal US Military Decorations and Qualifications

Defense Distinguished Service Medal (with 2 oak leaf clusters)

Army Distinguished Service Medal

Legion of Merit (with oak leaf cluster)

Bronze Star (with "V" device)

Bronze Star (with 3 oak leaf clusters)

Purple Heart

Meritorious Service Medal (with 2 oak leaf clusters)

Air Medal

Army Commendation Medal (with 3 oak leaf clusters)

Special Forces

Ranger

Master Parachutist

Military Freefall Parachutist

Air Assault

Pathfinder

Combat Infantryman